



# Department of Justice

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MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2004  
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## **NORTH CAROLINA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Justice Department today announced that a Richlands, North Carolina man pleaded guilty in federal court to obstructing a federal criminal investigation. Specifically, Roston Chance Hobbs admitted hindering attempts to investigate the criminal racially motivated harassment of an African-American family.

Hobbs told United States District Court Judge James C. Fox that in June 2003, he encouraged a witness to provide false information to federal investigators. The underlying investigation stemmed from a series of racial incidents in 1999 aimed at intimidating an African-American family that had just moved into a previously all-white Richlands, North Carolina neighborhood.

"The Justice Department is committed to prosecuting vigorously racially motivated crimes," said R. Alexander Acosta, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. "Today's plea is a reminder that those who would seek to frustrate justice and protect the perpetrators of despicable racial intimidation will be held accountable."

On February 19, 2004, a federal grand jury indicted Hobbs for obstruction of justice and for lying to the FBI, and indicted three other men for conspiring to violate the victims' civil rights. Accused in the conspiracy count were Ricky Chase Hobbs of Richlands, Joshua Hancock of Leland, and Jeremy Kratzer of Maple Hill. On April 26, 2004, Hancock pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge, admitting that he participated in hanging a rope noose on the family's door to frighten and intimidate them into moving away from Richlands.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and is being prosecuted by attorneys from the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

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